The
COMMONWEAL

VOLUME XLII *August* 17, 1945 NUMBER 18

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THE COMMONWEAL *is indexed in the Reader's Guide, Catholic Periodical Index and Catholic Bookman. Founded by the Calvert Associates, Inc., in* 1924, *with Michael Williams as President and Editor.*

Published weekly and copyrighter 1945 in the U.S.A. by THE COMMONWEAL Publishing Co., Inc., 386 Fourth Avenue, New York 16, N. Y. ASbland 4-9685. Entered as second class matter February 9, 1934 at the post office at New York, N. Y., under the act of March 3, 1879. U.S. $5 a year. Canada and Foreign $6. Single copies 10c.

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I SHALL GIVE further consideration and make further recommendations to the Congress as to how atomic power can become a powerful and forceful influence toward the maintenance of peace."—President Truman, August 6, 1945.

★

We excerpt a passage from Eugene O'Neill's play "Marco Millions," as it appears in "Nine Plays by Eugene O'Neill," published by the Garden City Publishing Company:

MARCO POLO. It all came to me, like an inspiration, last Easter Sunday when Father and Uncle and I were holding a little service. Uncle read a prayer which spoke of Our Lord as the Prince of Peace. Somehow, that took hold of me. I thought to myself, well, it's funny, there always have been wars and there always will be, I suppose, because I've never read much in any history about heroes who waged peace. Still, that's wrong. War is a waste of money which eats into the profits of life like thunder! Then why war, I asked myself? But how are you going to end it? Then the flash came! There's only one workable way and that's to conquer everybody else in the world so they'll never dare fight you again! An impossible task, you object? Not any more! This invention you see before you makes conquering easy. Let me demonstrate with these models. On our right, you see the fortress wall of a hostile capital. Under your present system with battering rams, to make an effective breach in this wall would cost you the lives of ten thousand men. Valuing each life conservatively at ten yen, this amounts to one hundred thousand yen! This makes the cost of breaching prohibitive. But all of this waste can be saved. How? Just keep your eyes on your right and permit my exclusive invention to solve this problem. (*He addresses the fortress in a matter-of-fact tone*) So you won't surrender, eh? (*Then in a mock-heroic falsetto, answering himself like a ventriloquist*) We die but we never surrender! (*Then matter-of-factly*) Well, Brother, those heroic sentiments do you a lot of credit, but this is war and not a tragedy. You're up against new methods this time, and you better give in and avoid wasteful bloodshed. (*Answering himself*) No! Victory or Death! (*Then again*) All right, Brother, don't blame me. Fire! *His uncle fires the gun. There is a bang, and a leaden ball is shot out which knocks a big breach in the wall of blocks.* MARCO *beams.* KUKACHIN *gives a scream of fright, then a gasp of delight, and claps her hands.* MARCO *bows to her the more gratefully as* KUBLAI *and* CHU-YIN *are staring at him with a queer appalled wonder that puzzles him although he cannot imagine it is not admiration*) I see you are stunned again. What made it do that, you're wondering? This! (*He takes a little package out of his pocket and pours some black powder out of it on his palm*) It's the same powder they've been using here in children's fire works. They've had it under their noses for years without a single soul ever having creative imagination enough to visualize the enormous possibilities. But you can bet I did! It was a lad crying with a finger half blown off where he held a firecracker too long that first opened my eyes. I learned the formula, improved on it, experimented in secret, and here's the gratifying result! (*He takes the cannon ball from his father who has retrieved it*) You see? Now just picture this little ball magnified into one weighing twenty pounds or so and then you'll really grasp my idea. The destruction of property and loss of life would be tremendous! No one could resist you!

KUBLAI (*after a pause—musingly*). I am interested in the hero of that city who preferred death to defeat. Did you conquer his immortal soul?

"The Best Bad News of the War"

APART from the above, all we have to say about the atomic bomb (and a couple of other minor matters) is: (1) It makes all such arguments as that about the use of poison gas seem

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ridiculous. (2) It makes the complete Potsdam de-industrialization of Germany the only possible policy until (3) we go beyond confederation—the San Francisco Charter—and establish a Federal Constitution creating a world government under law.

Industry-Labor Meet

NO DISSENTING voices are raised against Senator Vandenberg's proposal, backed by Secretary Schwellenbach, that leaders of American labor and American industry meet under government auspices to plan peaceful relations during reconversion and what follows. Release from wartime restrictions for both workers and management will inevitably bring with it thorny occasions for dispute. A mutual determination during this period to iron out such difficulties equitably and with good will must be developed. Yet one wonders whether a session of mere back-slapping and fair promises will lead to much.

The angle of approach to this imminent postwar problem of industrial harmony is all-important. If the meeting is convened, not so much to reach a general agreement all round that labor and management will seek to live in peace, but rather to collaborate on a much more urgent and specific problem the chance of maintaining harmony is far greater. What that problem is, of course, is obvious enough. It is the attainment of a full-bodied economy in peacetime, one which will adequately utilize the nation's vast productive capacity and our manpower resources, which will meet the huge potential consumer demand—in short, what Secretary Wallace and others designate as "60,000,000 jobs."

In this connection we call attention to the wide success of the labor-management committees which were set up and still function so effectively in a number of major American and Canadian war plants. The extent to which such constructive joint action affects the relationship between workers and executives is vividly portrayed in Stuart Chase's "Men at Work." The workers and the managers on one committee he observed were undistinguishable. All the men called each other by their first names; the group thought of itself as a united team and all consciousness of individual status had disappeared. It was the success of their productive enterprise which mattered. The number of usable suggestions which workers brought in to facilitate efficient production ran into the hundreds. Worker members of the committee had some of the posts of prime responsibility.

On the scale of the individual manufacturing plant, as on the regional and national scales, the problems of reconversion and the maintenance of full production and full employment call for the inter-action of the best minds and the most experienced men in America. Reconversion and postwar employment have too long been neglected; they require the most expert cooperative effort. Indeed the surest means of assuring labor-management peace in the months to come is to make the attack on idle plants-unemployment a joint attack with due responsibilities assigned all round.

Brooklyn "Tablet"

SOME schoolboys pass through a period in which, overcome by their first perceptions of vulgarity, they manage to make Dido obscene, find dirty fun in Shakespeare and—the more precocious—something to snigger at in the pure constructions of plane geometry. This state is perhaps physiological; in most, it passes.

But something that does not pass so readily is the tendency in certain adults to stand at the edge of something like the Grand Canyon and at their feet see only the waste paper someone has left after the picnic. Such unfortunate eyes look at the war, the confused years of suffering and courage, the confused purposes, the defeats and the victories, and the uncertain hopes, and all that is perceived will be some detail shockingly out of scale with any grandeur whatsoever.

The war in Europe is won, Mr. Churchill is replaced by Mr. Attlee. The Managing Editor of the Brooklyn *Tablet* looks at the scene and writes: "The British knew his astuteness [Mr. Churchill's]—could any achievement be greater than his having the US Government pay Great Britain passage for the Americans going abroad to rescue Britain from Germany?"

The British people face a future as complex as that which faces any nation that has been our friend and ally in these hard years; through a process as democratic as is our own they elect a government to serve their need. Of the new Prime Minister, the Managing Editor of the Brooklyn *Tablet* writes: "He seems to be a man of parts, particularly in the guise of a front for Dr. Harold Laski, well known revolutionist and ardent anti-Christian. . . . His first speech as Prime Minister indicates his time and energy will be given to improving the lot of the British populace, the war against Japan will have only a secondary interest. At the same time he—or is it Dr. Laski?—promises support for the revolutionists and class war advocates in other countries. . . . That is a clear picture of the new Prime Minister, together with one mentioned in the press that when the present war began he was a 'conscientious objector'—he favored, it seems, only class war . . . if Great Britain and its people prosper under his régime we shall be greatly surprised."

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The *Tablet* did not like Churchill (nor Roosevelt); it does not like Mr. Attlee. It will be surprised, and perhaps pained, if any good ever comes out of England. There is nothing much to be done about the *Tablet's* temperament; but we might suggest that it may be less exposed to "surprise," if it pays some attention to fact. (1) Mr. Attlee was indeed a conscientious objector at the start of the *last* war, the war of 1914-1918. However he joined up, rose to the rank of Major, led his troops in front line combat. (2) Dr. Laski's "front" was requested by Dr. Laski three weeks before the election to give up the party leadership. "Laski wrote a candid note to Attlee, saying that he and a few others thought the party needed a stronger man as leader and would he, therefore, stand aside. . . . Attlee replied briefly and acidly, 'It was good of you to let me have your opinion of myself.' He stayed." (*Life,* August 6). Previous to this incident Laski had publicly warned the world that Mr. Attlee accompanying Mr. Churchill to Potsdam did not go there with his blessing. Anyone who knows anything about British politics knows that Mr. Attlee and Dr. Laski are at opposite wings of the British Labor Party.

Dr. Laski is an arrogant and brilliant doctrinaire; Mr. Attlee is neither doctrinaire nor arrogant. Because he is an idealist and not convinced that a successful revolution can be carried out in a day it is possible that he does not look upon Dr. Laski as an enemy, in spite of obvious and well-known provocations to do so; certainly he must look upon him as a problem. The British Labor Party is not a unit dominated by one man. (3) If in Mr. Attlee's first speech there had been no indication that he intended to work, as best he could, determinedly, toward "improving the lot of the British populace," the British people might well have thought it very odd. After all, in going to the elections, that is one of the things they thought about. For some time now, they have not had a pleasant time. There is room for improvement in the conditions under which they live. They elected a government with the idea that it would work to improve those conditions. That is a fact and we do not see why that fact should disturb the Brooklyn *Tablet.*

But it is a fact also that in that first speech of his Mr. Attlee used the plainest possible language to say that he would fulfil—that Great Britain would fulfil—all Mr. Churchill's and Britain's pledges to prosecute the war against Japan until it was won. There is not a fact upon which the Brooklyn *Tablet* can base any doubting of Mr. Attlee's word. There are facts that confirm that word. There are such things as the daily papers and by reading them most Americans have heard something about a hard fought Burma campaign, and they know that the Englishman Mountbatten has not been idle. Most Americans know that British battleships are working with our own and that hundreds of British planes are taking off daily from British aircraft carriers.

If the Brooklyn *Tablet* must dabble in international affairs it should temper its prejudices by a certain respect for facts.

Divergent Views of Our Contemporaries

IN THE New York *Sun* for August 2 Mr. George Sokolsky writes: "There is no reason why the Russians need to understand us; there is less reason why we should sacrifice an iota of our liberties to please them." In *Life* for August 6 Gertrude Stein writes: "That evening I went over to talk to the soldiers, and to hear what they had to say, we all got very excited. . . . Well said one of them after all we are on top. Yes I said and is there any spot on earth more dangerous than on top. You don't like the Latins, or the Arabs or the Wops, or the British, well don't you forget a country can't live without friends, make a little effort, try to find out what it is all about. We all got very excited, they passed me cognac, but I don't drink so they found me some grapefruit juice, and they patted and sat me down, and there it all was."

$100 *Reward*

IN THE July 21, 1945, *Boletin de Informacion* of the USSR Embassy in Mexico City the following sentence is quoted from *Pravda*: "Le revista norteamericana *Commonwealth* [sic] declara que la U.R.S.S. deparará al mundo entero el más sombrío porvenir . . ." We hereby formally offer $100 reward to the first person able to produce from our editorials during the past three or four years (*not,* of course, from communications or signed articles) any quotation substantiating this statement.

N.B.

"CONDITIONS facing Europe this winter threaten the economic and political structure of the Continent and 'all our hopes for a permanent and peaceful settlement in European affairs,' Herbert H. Lehman of New York, United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration Director General, declared today. . . .

"Admitting that the conditions he saw on the Continent during his recent five-week tour of Italy, Greece and Yugoslavia were 'more disquieting than expected,' Mr. Lehman described as 'the most serious single problem facing the United Nations today' the job of bringing Europe through the coming winter.

" 'We may undo by our failure to aid these countries now all that has been achieved by our united efforts,' he warned. . . ."

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The Pétain Trial

"What ought we to do? This. That. The contrary to this or that."—*Saint-Exupéry.*

C. G. Paulding

AS HE [General Hering, a defense witness] appraised Pétain, five jurors began reading newspapers, one started a crossword puzzle, two fell asleep and two more leaned back in their chairs staring at the ceiling."

Perhaps, at times, it was that way also during the Revolution. It was very exciting at times. When they tried the King it must have been exciting, and when they turned against Danton, and he spoke back. But there must have been dull moments when everything seemed very obvious. The judges would get out of bed in the morning, the executioners would get out of bed a little later in the morning; some people have to go to work earlier than others. The judges would be in their courts, and then a little later the executioners would turn up to see if the slot in the guillotine had not been warped by the rain. Then there were the men who had to get the horses out of the stables and hitch them to the carts, tumbrels, I believe, which conveyed the condemned from the courts to the guillotine. They worked on schedule too. Everyone connected with the system went to work every day at his appointed hour and then the accused were brought out of their prisons and "processed." It was like demobilizing an army: so many a day, and just as the men working in the Separation Centers must get tired of seeing the same joy each day on the faces of the soldiers drawing their final pay, bored by the daily jokes about not having to salute any more, and by their own answers to the jokes, so the judges of the Revolution must have become inured to the daily spectacle of bravery and resignation as also to the exceptional spectacle of cowardice. There must have been days when they had nothing to tell their families when they came home from work after a stroll and a drink in the garden of the Palais Royal.

Whoever is in charge of the current spectacle in Paris does not mind when the jurors are bored by a defense witness. Since the jurors have been selected from people who have already made up their minds—from members of the Resistance and from members of parliament who voted against giving Pétain plenipotentiary powers—it is only natural that the defense should seem to them a waste of time. Or else that it should infuriate them. It does both. They are acting true to form.

Whoever is managing the current spectacle in Paris desires us to think that the Pétain trial is a revolutionary trial. The thesis is that the whole French nation has risen against the politicians who did not prepare for the war, against the Generals who lost the war, against the Marshal who signed the armistice, collaborated with the Germans and betrayed France. And so the trial is not a search for truth, it is the public exposure of truth, it is a simple demonstration. Everyone knows who is guilty; the trial simply parades the guilty before the people of France. Look at them—Daladier, Reynaud, Weygand—how they fight each one against the other. How each one blames another. Because it is not just Pétain who is guilty. It is Pétain's trial. But it is also the trial of all the witnesses. Everyone is guilty. The witnesses for the defense, of course, but the witnesses for the prosecution also, because they are the people who handed France over to Pétain. Of course there are degrees in guilt, and the armistice marks a dividing line in time. Admittedly it is difficult to apportion guilt among so many. There are technical difficulties. For instance, if you are over-scrupulous you will have trouble even about Judge Montgibeaux because he took the oath of fidelity under the Pétain régime, and about Prosecutor Mornet because he nearly got a job under the Pétain régime. But after all under our system the judge does not judge, and the prosecutor, under any system, prosecutes as hard as he can, so that what counts is the jury, and the jury is very carefully picked in order that it may represent without any blemish the entire French nation which has risen, etc.

That is what we are desired to think; that is the picture of the Pétain trial that is given by those who set it in motion and who control it. It is a false picture; there is no use desiring us to accept it as a true picture. The trial is not a revolutionary trial because there has not been a revolution. The French people have not risen against the politicians or against the generals or against the Marshal. What has occurred is that the Russian armies, the British armies, the American armies have defeated the German army and, as Admiral Leahy puts it in his letter to Pétain, among the "good aspects" of this victory is the fact that France has been freed.

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But only what is left of France has been freed. Pierre Laval—wait till they get to him—called by neither the prosecution nor by the defense but by the court, testifying cried out: "I hate war. Whether we lose or win. But we always lose." The jury did not like this remark. But the fact is that France lost throughout all the Napoleonic triumphs, France lost in 1870 (Alsace-Lorraine and money), France *lost* in 1914-1918, men and money, so grievously that she never recovered, and what is incredibly heroic is that her soldiers had the will to fight—for they did fight bravely—in 1940. When this last war was over, it was over; when it was lost, it was lost.

From London de Gaulle said: "We have lost a battle; we have not lost the war." That was not true. Nothing he could do could win the war. The war was lost. Nothing the Resistance Movement could do within France could liberate France. No heroism, and there was a great deal of heroism, could free France of the Germans. From the moment of France's defeat the liberation of France became accidental to the purposes of other nations. The decision of the war no longer belonged to France. Or to Europe.

★

So France lost another war, and now she might be able to fight a war with Spain, or with Italy, but there would not be much purpose in her attempting a war against the United States or against Russia and there is no more a Germany to fight against. France lost another war but in a military sense it does not matter as it used to matter because her perpetual antagonist, Germany, lost the same war and consequently the entire power structure of Europe is profoundly altered. It was not losing the war that placed France in her present position. It was what she lost while in the process of losing the war that has weakened her so immensely. France lost the war in a few months and then if the war had ended that would have been one thing. But the war kept on as if France were still fighting the war. In spite of Pétain and Laval on the one side, in spite of de Gaulle on the other, there was nothing anyone could do to take France out of the war she had already lost. The prisoners remained in Germany; the Germans remained in France.

No one could take France out of the war she had lost because no one could take France out of Europe and it was Europe that had lost the war. No one could take any part of Europe out of the disaster which had come upon Europe. Norway was in the disaster, and Denmark, and they had no free choice whatever. Italy who had fought on the other side was in the common disaster. All the countries of Europe, including European Russia, were in the disaster. England was in the disaster and is in the disaster.

What is left of France has been freed from German occupation but not from the European catastrophe.

In that perspective the trial of Marshal Pétain is meaningless. Because Marshal Pétain did not have, and could not have had, any determining influence in any attempt he made or might have made to annul the predicament in which France found herself when her armies were defeated. The predicament of defeat. At first. Then, later and gradually, the predicament of being a part of a defeated whole, a part of Europe wholly defeated.

At first, in the first moment of defeat, de Gaulle, but practically no one else, no one else who had not already lost his authority, thought that if the Government went to Africa and kept up the war from Africa then there would not be any defeat. That was an intellectual concept that has its merits if one can live by the sound of words. It is true that if the Government and every responsible leader, all the generals—and even all the colonels—had gone to Africa, they could have kept on saying from there that they were fighting the war. It is true also that the war rapidly might have followed them to Africa. But, after all, Africa is not France, and had they been driven to Indo-China, Indo-China is France even less than Africa is France. No matter where the Government and the responsible leaders went to, they would have left the French people behind in France. They would have left France to collaborate or not collaborate. They would have left the Resistance Movement to fight it out and the hostages to be shot and the profiteers to profiteer; they would have left the French people alone with the Germans, and the French people would have acted just as they did with Pétain there and Laval and the rest of them arguing and compromising with the Germans. Because when a country is conquered no government can be heroic; only the people can be heroic, only a certain limited section of the people are heroic. The government of a conquered country expresses many of the tendencies existing in the conqurered people: all their weaknesses, all their desire to reach an understanding, all their entreaty to be spared, all their hunger, all their despair; but there is one tendency it never expresses and that is a conquered nation's stubborn bravery. Because the instant it expressed that courage it would cease to be that government; it would be reabsorbed into the suffering of the nation; it would become the resistance of the nation. A nation's resistance movement is not accredited to the conqueror.

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So that what Pétain did or did not do during the occupation does not make a very great difference. His intentions make a great difference

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because a man's honor is of some importance, but how does one read the heart? A court, composed entirely of Pétain's enemies, is a clumsy instrument for measuring his love of country. We have Admiral Leahy's judgment in his letter of June 22, 1945, to Marshal Pétain:

> . . . I held your personal friendship and your devotion to the welfare of the French people in very high regard. You often expressed to me the fervent hope that the nazi invaders would be destroyed.
>
> During that period (1941-1942) you did, on occasion at my request, take action in opposition to the desires of the Axis and favorable to the Allied cause. On every instance when you failed to accept my recommendations to oppose the Axis powers by refusing their demands, you stated the reason was that such positive action by you would result in additional oppression of your people by the invaders.
>
> I had then, as I have now, the conviction that your principal concern was the welfare and protection of the helpless people of France. It was impossible for me to believe that you had any other concern. . . .

I give to that more value than I do to anything Reynaud may have to say who has his skin to save, or to the impertinence of Clemenceau's son who dares to tell a court of justice, even so odd a court, what his father would have said in 1945 had he not died in 1929, and I note that Herriot, whom I have always admired, was prudent and restrained in his testimony. But we have to leave it at that. If the court is no judge, we are no judge.* The burden of proof, of course, is always with those who call a man a traitor. All that may be said is that when you look about for traitors, most of them betray for money, some of them betray because they are held by fear, and a few, the most interesting, because they deeply hate their country. It is quite obvious that there is not the slightest foundation for attributing any of these motives to Pétain.

And there is something else. In this closed room of inevitability in which Pétain lived throughout the occupation, there was a limit placed on everything but on his thoughts. In "Flight to Arras" Saint-Exupéry is not talking about Pétain and I am quoting this greatest writer of the war, who died for his country, out of context in applying what he says to the trial. What he says is what I have been trying to say: "Historians will forget reality. They will invent thinking men, joined by mysterious fibers to an intelligible universe, possessed of sound far-sighted views and pondering grave decisions according to the purest laws of Cartesian logic. There will be powers of good and powers of evil. Heroes and traitors. But treason implies responsibility for something, control over something, influence upon something, knowledge of something. Treason in our time is a proof of genius. . . ."

*This matter of intention, moreover, will apply with far greater urgency when Laval is tried. Laval believed that the war's decision was irreversible, he acted accordingly—deliberately, with a plan. Was that plan for Germany's benefit or, in Laval's heart, was it for his country's?

★

Pétain himself started this series of political trials in which everyone concerned knows exactly what should have been done and the whole course of the war is remodeled on paper, reshaped in words. At Riom, he brought Gamelin, Daladier and Blum to trial and asked them why they had brought France into a war under circumstances in which she would lose the war. That trial went all to pieces. Gamelin was silent (he is writing now but it is visible that he has nothing to say); the others talked back. The trial had to be called off. And now de Gaulle is engaged in the same futile research for responsibility. He too is getting no more than a "dusty answer" in his quest for certainties—and there are also Meredith's other lines: "In tragic life God wot no villain need be; we are betrayed by what is false within."

France was betrayed because under the ideology in which she lived and lives there was no course but to go to war and, going to war, there was no other end than that she must lose the war. When that result was achieved, here is what Saint-Exupéry said: "Tomorrow we of France will enter into the night of defeat. May my country still exist when day dawns again. What ought we to do to save my country? I do not know. *Contradictory things* [italics mine]. Our spiritual heritage must be preserved, else our people will be deprived of their genius. Our people must be preserved else our heritage will become lost. For want of a way to reconcile heritage and people in their formulas, logicians will be tempted to sacrifice either the body or the soul. But I want nothing to do with logicians. I want my country to exist both in the flesh and in the spirit when day dawns."

The Paris court is looking at those "contradictory things." A court is not meant to look at "contradictory things." This falsely revolutionary court is unable by reason of its nature to understand a synthesis. Yet that synthesis is what the French nation as a living organism produced in order to maintain life.

Pétain is Churchill in reverse. With the end of the war Churchill fell not for the reason that ingratitude is the characteristic of great nations but because the war in Europe was ended and Churchill was a part, *magna pars,* of the war. With the end of the war Pétain fell because France was free once more, and Pétain was the symbol of her long captivity. England and France rejected the men who had concentrated all their efforts on the war; they came out of the war and left behind them the memory of the war—the memory of victory or defeat, it does not matter—they left behind them the men who had done the

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job of the war; they desired above all to proceed from the war into something else.

None of the men of the defeat can be in power in France again. Not Reynaud, not Daladier, not even Blum can be elected again. Nor Gamelin nor Weygand will again lead a French army. Yet it is not fundamentally because these men were defeated. What did France do to Clemenceau? It is because France emerges now from the war and is looking for men who are interested in building roads, who are interested in food, who are passionately devoted to the interests of peace.

They are not the men she has found. If de Gaulle were everything most admirable in all the world, he is still a general. France is not looking for generals. It is a time for all generals to go and live in the country. The French are rid of Pétain, who represented defeat, and they have de Gaulle who represents defeat. They have the Senegalese. They fight well these Senegalese. They fought in Africa, in Italy, in France; they are in Germany now as a supreme humiliation to the Germans. But they represent defeat because wherever they are they suggest the absence of Frenchmen. France has de Gaulle who represents defeat and never as vividly as now when he is building tanks (already obsolete) and planes (already obsolete) and a battleship; parading through Paris troops which represent defeat because any conceivable French army of any sort is inadequate hopelessly for any dream of victory in any of the immense wars that might come. A French army now can only be an army to frighten Belgium.

France has come out of captivity but does not recognize the world that she has not seen for so long. In this new world the court of the Pétain trial is meaningless. All that they say at the trial is meaningless. The verdict will be meaningless.

After a time France will come completely out of the war and out of all the debates of the war, freed entirely from the need of judging "contradictory things." Her true grandeur I have defended all my life. It is apparent now in her great sorrow and fatigue. It is not apparent in her present leadership because that leadership is still in the war and in the defeat.

Vision

There's everything for the very young to see;
But they notice incidentally,
They look more with their hands and their feet.
More with their bodies than with their eyes
They are on the watch for life's breast.

There's little the very old need to see;
But they are peering constantly,—
While they clasp and unclasp their own limp hands
They are always peering around,
And they idly yawn for lack of the long rest.

WITTER BYNNER.

Politics of Self-Determination

GEORGE STREATOR

ACCORDING to the New York *Times* (July 24, 1945), Harlem's Negro City Councilman, Mr. Benjamin Davis Jr., blamed his ignorance of Marxism for his dropping of the line on self-determination in the Black Belt. It has not been possible for me under a set of unfavorable circumstances to obtain a copy of the *Daily Worker* of the date that Mr. Davis's complete thesis was expounded, but it may be possible to reconstruct briefly what the discussion is about.

Self-determination aimed at complete independence for minorities is older than the American Communist Party. We might view it as a political development of the last World War, although that was not the first time it was profitable for one state to raise the question of minorities in order to harass another. It is possible to say that Mr. Woodrow Wilson raised the minorities question with a bang to embarrass the Austro-Hungarian empire, but that is not the beginning of the argument. The point is, self-determination is an old approach, and the emphasis that Mr. Davis wants to put upon it is not new, either.

Perhaps the most quoted passage in Marxist literature made use of by those who have formulated the Negro line for the American Communist Party can be found in Volume XXIX of the Marxist Library, the letter of Engels to Schüter, London, March 30, 1892. It is in this *historic* document that Engels refers to the American bourgeoisie: "your bourgeoisie knows much better than the Austrian Government how to play off one nationality against another: Jews, Italians, Bohemians, etc., against Germans and Irish, and each against the other, so that differences in the standard of life of different workers exist, I believe, in New York to an extent unheard of elsewhere."

The argument is that America, having no feudal background, is indifferent toward "the human lives which succumb in the competitive struggle." "There will be plenty more (i.e., immigrants), and more than we want of these damned Dutchmen, Irishmen, Italians, Jews and Hungarians." The Chinese were a great part of American railroad building in those days, and Engels added, "and beyond them in the background stands John Chinaman, who thus far surpasses them all in his ability to live on dirt."

Marx's letter to Engels (August 7, 1862) comes closer to the background of American radical thinking, whether right or left-wing Socialist, Communist, or I. W. W., and it even comes close to just plain professional inter-racialism.

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Marx reviewed accurately the progress of the Civil War, the entrance of which seemed to be troubling Engels. Marx said, "The North itself has turned the slaves into a military force on the side of the Southerners, instead of against them. The South leaves productive labor to the slaves and could therefore put its whole fighting strength into the field without disturbance. . . ."

But in Marx's opinion, "all this will take another turn"—it did. He wrote: "In the end the North will take the war seriously, adopt revolutionary methods and throw over the domination of the border states statesmen. *A single nigger regiment would have a remarkable effect on Southern nerves.*" (Italics ours). This last sentence is very important; when written it also was prophetic, for one year later, in June, 1863, Colonel Robert Gould Shaw, of Boston, died fighting at the head of just such a regiment, the 54 Massachusetts Volunteers—but the communists rarely quote Marx when he writes at his crudest level.

At different periods of the struggle, Negroes have felt that the various European minorities, all others than the English Protestants, have viewed the Negro as a "single nigger regiment" which would serve as shock troops for the revolution. This is still the view held by the vast majority of Negroes, both within and without the Communist Party: the danger of doing the great act of dying for the Jews, the Irish, the Poles, the Italians. There is also sound ground for suspicion that a lot of militant Northern whites hold to this "single nigger regiment" thesis when they set out to build a revolutionary party in the South. (I remember reading somewhere in Jonathan Daniels's book, "A Southerner Discovers the South," the story of the Negro socialist tenant farmer who noted that the white comrades called him "mister," but always waited for him to get the horse out of the hole on Sundays.)

Councilman Davis is in many ways an *historical* contradiction himself. (His father is, or was for years, Republican National Committeeman for Georgia; and in this lucrative spot, Councilman Davis's potatoes were grown; on this not radical background the thesis spudded!) Anyway, the Davis confession, which came just after he had enrolled himself in the Democratic Party, reveals that he took on "revisionist errors" and did not detect them because he was not "sufficiently mature and equipped as a Marxist." That is to say, during his period of greatest Marxist immaturity, Mr. Davis was elected to the New York City Council on the Communist ticket with almost a solid Negro backing in upper Manhattan, just as his father was repeatedly elected national committeeman in Georgia without any Marxism at all! Unfortunately, when the line commanded him to bore solidly from within, Mr. Davis and the young communists who control considerable machinery in Harlem's Tammany Hall assimilated themselves into the Democratic Party . . . but that is generally known, although it seems that some Irish would not have it that way.

The purpose here is to point out that Mr. Davis was elected in New York, just as his father was in Georgia, on the desire of the Negro electorate to have a voice in government. But, to understand Mr. Davis's politics *and* Marxism correctly, one must think in the same vein with the orthodox Jewish ghetto-politician, "Is it good for the Jews?" or with the Irish boy from his ghetto, "What's in it for me, boys?" Mr. Davis might be saying, "If I cannot be elected by the support of white voters, then I will set up a measure of black nationalism and cash in there!" Perhaps the white communists who voted for Davis might have been thinking: "A single nigger regiment (Negro Councilman) would have a remarkable effect on Southern (capitalist) nerves." Words, of course, are interchangeable things.

The Communist Party are hardly likely to make a great issue of the self-determination line, even though Mr. Davis, to show his dislike of Earl Browder and his machine, made some effort to go back to it himself. Those who do not remember very well how this line worked are referred to "The Negro Question in the United States" by James S. Allen (International Publishers, 1936). Without a doubt, this is the greatest single piece of confusion and despair that has ever descended upon a single race. (This is the book that builds up the case history of every Negro business failure to prove the main thesis, to wit, that the Negro can prosper only under communism.) The effects of the depression follow:

"The insecurity of the Negro middle class . . . are (*sic*) causing significant changes in the loyalty of large sectors of this class. . . . The influence of the old bourgeois programs is gradually diminishing. . . . Dr. DuBois, it can be expected, will either have to radically change his position or become a pitiful relic of a played-out program. . . . In these times of threatening catastrophe self-preservation demands that the Negro middle-class take its position alongside organized labor and all other progressive forces to stave off fascism and war." That, of course, was 1936, before Peoples' Fronts, and even before later analyses of "capitalist wars."

There are five basic arguments in this book presented to support the rationality of a black republic to be set up in the South: 1) "A continuous area of Negro majority"; 2) "The chief factor . . . is the modern plantation system based upon forms of labor which are survivals of chattel slavery"; 3) "The Negro is the chief victim of the plantation system"; 4) "The meas-

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ures undertaken by the Roosevelt administration have especially bolstered the plantation economy"; and 5) "Thus conditions were matured, on the eve of the chronic crisis of capitalism, both for working-class solidarity between black and white labor and for bourgeois nationalism among Negroes."

If Mr. Davis is still insufficiently trained in Marxism to grasp these nuggets that make mandatory the creation of a black State—"The highest political expression of the democratic revolution in the South"—he might add a few more notions which I wish to suggest. If one would understand American Marxism as developed up to this point completely, one must recall Marx's *historic* words to Engels, as quoted above, "A single nigger regiment would have a remarkable effect on Southern nerves."

Southern nerves continue to react that way; that is to say, the nerves of some Southerners, the poll-tax Southerners who protect the financial interests that rest upon poverty and ignorance. But that is not the whole story. Let us grant that the ruling classes of the South have been for seventy years as unprincipled as Governor Arnold said they are in a recent issue of *Collier's*. It still holds however that the revolutionary parties created in the North so far, tend to lean upon that *historical* statement of Marx about "a single nigger regiment."

What Mr. Davis and a lot of other Negroes do not understand is that being gullible is a great asset to the other fellow; that after twenty years of playing radical, some American white people from New York, Chicago, Atlanta, San Francisco and even Portland, Oregon, have been able to cash in on our national *fright*. Even the army has found that the white communists make excellent officers! The Navy has not talked, but they will find, too, that the pale-face Marxist takes his orders lying down.

We must remember also the Marx letter of September 10, 1862: "As for the Yankees, I am as certain as ever in my opinion that the North will win in the end. . . . The South, an *oligarchy*, is better adapted to it, especially an oligarchy where the whole productive work falls on the niggers, and the four millions of 'white trash' are professional filibusters. All the same I would bet my head that these fellows will get the worst of it . . ." Therefore, if it is the American communist state of mind that you are seeking to fathom, here is one key to it.

Hence, apparently, the "one official communist statement" quoted by the New York *Times* goes way off what Marx might have had in mind, or at least, far away from the Marxian understanding of the "industrial North." (Take care that we do not write a thesis, too.) Anyway, this official statement quoted July 7, 1945, read: "In this territory we demand that the Negroes be given the complete right of self-determination, the right to set up their own government in this territory and the right to separate, if they wish, from the United States." Not a chance, comrade. What we will have in fact, is that a host of white communists will want to go down to this black State, and having got in, they will follow the line of the Civil War carpetbaggers!

What is the line? Well, the bewildered rural un-Marxist oafs among the Negroes will continue pulling the horses out of the holes on Sunday, albeit they are called "mister." In time, the Marxists from New York will be smarter on the pencil, and while the black rural brother is busy being elected chairman of the order, the white brother will be elected secretary-treasurer—probably unanimously—at the point of a good Reconstruction pistol. Some years later, another Brother Davis will be saying: "I did not detect the errors because I was not sufficiently mature and equipped as a Marxist," instead of admitting the truth: "A single nigger regiment would have a remarkable effect on Southern nerves."

Christian Democracy in Italy

GUIDO GONELLA

Dr. Guido Gonella, formerly of the staff of l'Osservatore Romano *and author of "A World to Reconstruct," recently published an article in* Il Popolo *of Rome of which he is the editor. Thanks to the courtesy of Don Luigi Sturzo, and Dr. Mario Einaudi, who translated it, we print herewith the bulk of Dr. Gonella's statement.*—THE EDITORS.

A QUICK trip through northern Italy has given me most encouraging proof of the vitality, courage and faith of the scores of thousands of young and old alike fighting under the banner of Christian democracy. In Milan we paid homage to our dead within the sacred walls of the Duomo, and everywhere found evidence of the fighting ardor of both clergy and laymen. From the Bishop of Belluno, who in the public square climbed to the top of the scaffold to impart the last sacraments to patriots about to be hanged and to kiss their bodies, to the humble parish priests of the mountain valleys and of the plains of Lombardy and Venetia, everywhere there is witness to the strength and passion of their fight for freedom. In the barricades of Turin and during the insurrection of Genoa, Catholic priests and youths who had been the soul of the resistance were one of the main forces in the revolt against the enemy. . . .

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I have spoken with the Christian democratic leaders who have been placed at the head of local administrative bodies in the provinces of Padua, Verona, Modena, Piacenza, Venezia, Rovigo, Parma and many other cities, and I have been moved not only by their efforts to allay the physical sufferings of the people but also by their determination to protect the people against the new anarchical violence which has nothing to do with the punishment of fascist criminals, but is purely and simply a new weapon of political intimidation and terrorism. Our leaders are thus earning widespread gratitude for a concept of Christian democracy which knows how to fight for human liberty against all comers.

One of our main sources of strength comes from our program, which is based on a concept of radical reformism. The many political meetings which I have attended have shown clearly that Christian democracy aims to be in the forefront, to bring about a radical reform in the political and economic structure of the country.

Being convinced regionalists, Christian democrats are asking the end of the centralized state. Being radical democrats, they do not see any possibility of integral democracy unless political democracy be accompanied by economic democracy, which means a distribution of wealth and assigns to the working classes the rôle they deserve in society.

With regard to the monarchical question, the wisdom of the party's decision to postpone the settlement of that issue until the first party convention has been everywhere recognized. In this way, our northern friends will not be faced by *faits accomplis*. In this way, the decision which will be reached by a national convention of the party will acquire far more significance.

As in the south, the overwhelming majority of the Christian democrats of the north is decisively in favor of a republic. But what distinguishes our republican inclinations in the north is that we are conscious of the international aspects of the problem and that we do not feel any need to assume a demagogical attitude on the issue. It is felt that history has already rendered its verdict. Our fighting energies are aimed at objects far more concrete and urgent, such as the guarantee of political freedom which even today is unsafe, the defense of the Christian patrimony against which new menaces are being raised, agrarian reform and the struggle against economic privileges.

We are fully committed on these grounds with uncompromising spirit, even if this means a break with those parties with which we we have so far been in brotherly agreement in the fight against the common enemy. And it is precisely this ideological intransigence which has prevented the birth or spread in northern Italy of other Catholic political movements, characterized either by extreme leftist or extreme rightist inclinations. To conclude, our moral and political integralism represents a force whose effects will be soon apparent. The Christian democratic movement of northern Italy is ready to fight with courage and decision the impending battle.

Communications

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE EDITORS OF THE COMMONWEAL

DEAR MR. BINSSE: I have read and carefully considered your letter of July 24, written on behalf of all the Editors of THE COMMONWEAL, in which you propose a solution of the problem of my relationship with THE COMMONWEAL, and make other proposals, which it is a pleasure as well as a duty for me to comply with, as best I can.

In view of the admittedly ambiguous character of the term, "Special Editor," attached to my name on your masthead, the time was long overdue for a rectification of mistaken impressions, made on many readers of THE COMMONWEAL—both friendly and in some instances very unfriendly readers—that I was still, if not dominant, as I was during my long tenure of the chief editorial chair, still at least partly responsible for the editorial policies of the paper: for good or for bad. As you say in your letter, this impression was mistaken; however inevitable, because of the unfortunate phrase, "Special Editor."

The Editors of THE COMMONWEAL now propose to drop that misleading term, and in place of it to insert (I quote your letter) "a line in the masthead immediately under the lines which read, 'THE COMMONWEAL is indexed,' etc. This line would read: "Founded by Michael Williams in 1924.' "

I remarked above that it was a pleasure, as it was a duty, to answer your letter, in full—for there are other important points in it, to be considered below—my remark being due to the generous, as well as courteous, spirit of your main proposal, and of your other suggestions, dealt with hereinafter.

Of course, I assent to the change proposed; though I must in justice disclaim any personal belief that it is in fact correct, to designate me as sole "Founder." My opinion is that the reference to me might well read somewhat as follows: "Founded by The Calvert Associates, Inc.; 1924; Michael Williams, President, and Editor."

Please allow me what, if not to digress—for what I wish to remark here applies to the above proposal, yet is perhaps only of interest to a few of your readers—yet possibly this is a good time to record a few facts about the real Founders of THE COMMONWEAL. They formed a brave, and numerous, group of ladies and gentlemen, both clergymen and lay folk; the lay element predominating, and in full direction of what was regarded as a most hazardous enterprise. At which point it may also be just to declare that two Cardinals, the then Archbishops of New York and Boston, their late Eminences Patrick Cardinal Hayes and William Cardinal O'Con-

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nell, and a large group of Archbishops and Bishops, with the late Archbishop Hanna of San Francisco, then Chairman of the Executive Committee of the National Catholic Welfare Conference, as leader, were fully informed by me, acting as executive for the Founding group, of our hopes and our plans—and gave their full assent, and considerable, nay, indispensable assistance.

The actual Founders of THE COMMONWEAL were the following persons. First of all, because they were first to back up and guide me in realizing the first, rather nebulous, idea, were the Rev. Lawrason Riggs (R.I.P.), Chaplain to the Catholic students of Yale University, later on, but then an ecclesiastical student, not yet ordained; and G. Howland Shaw, Esq., of the Department of State. Prior, however, even to those two good friends of all aspiring causes, was Ralph Adams Cram (R.I.P.), with whom for years I maintained a correspondence largely dealing with the idea of publishing a review for Catholics and the Catholic-minded. Then there was the Rt. Rev. Joseph H. McMahon (R.I.P.), pastor of the Church of Our Lady of Lourdes, New York, who for so many years upheld the torch of intellectual as well as of spiritual interests among the mass of (mostly) indifferent, or covertly hostile, clergy and a supposedly educated laity. The majority of educated laymen seemed (generally speaking) to consider that Universities existed for the sake of making future Wall Street and golf club friends and fellow Mammonites. The Most Reverend Francis Clement Kelley, D.D., now Bishop of Oklahoma, but then a member of the faculty of the Catholic University (after his great career on *Extension,* and other future-building enterprises), was a prime mover among our group. His Heavenly Patron, Saint Francis of Sales, looking (as I guess) askance at the dull, mediocre mass of American Catholic journals, must have given Bishop Kelley special aid, which the creative Bishop passed on, in brisk American terms—despite his Canadian background—to the benefit of THE COMMONWEAL.

I cannot further particularize; space is too stringent nowadays; but if I more or less lump the rest of the Founders, it doesn't mean that the lump was ever sluggish—never was there a group of more distinct personalities—yet they cooperated, on the whole, harmoniously. There was—for prime example—Professor Carlton J. H. Hayes, of Columbia University, a tower of strength. There was Robert Wilberforce, Esq., experienced in the development of Catholic press work in England and other European countries (so far ahead of us!), as well as in the United States. And Gaylord Tucker, Esq., the advertising man, and then head of the Converts' League; and Dom Hugh Diman, O.S.B.; Summerfield Baldwin, Esq., of Harvard University; R. M. Patterson, Esq., who gave the paper that splendid policy which Mr. Skillin now follows so fruitfully: its interest in the Cooperative movement. And Dr. T. D. J. Gallagher, of Philadelphia, a gentleman of wide and highly cultivated interests.

Then—a niche apart for them!—there were the Two Wonderful Walshes: Thomas the Poet, the World Traveler. the debonair yet learned and always witty Thomas (R.I.P.); and the late James J. Walsh, of the Catholic Encyclopedia staff (with the generous and broad-minded Father Wynne, S.J., and Condé Pallen, Esq., also of the great Encyclopedia, which opened the way for all future Catholic literary enterprises, aiding and abetting our modern American Samuel Johnson).

Of R. Dana Skinner (R.I.P.) and Gouverneur Paulding, his younger Harvard associate and dear friend, both of whom were privy to the plan long before it was launched, and who, with Summerfield Baldwin, and Daniel Sargent, one of our Directors, most generously turned over to us the fruits of a plan already maturing in Harvard circles to launch a review under Catholic auspices—well, I cannot speak of Dana as fully as I would wish: so briefly let it be said: if Dana and Paulding weren't Founders, then the venture wasn't founded: like Topsy, it just grew: but it didn't. It was Planned.

Then, what about the Ladies? And the invaluable Business Man, John F. McCormick, Esq., and his capable assistant, long my private secretary when the whole thing wasn't a Plan but only a Dream and an Adventure, Miss Estelle Brady? But the Ladies cannot be simply dismissed after a salute—that stupid male custom! Where would our Founding have been without the creative, if indirect efforts on our behalf of such brilliant women as Mrs. Ward, of Liturgical music fame; and Mrs. Euphemia Van Rensselaer Wyatt; of Miss Agnes Keyes and of course her brother, Tom Walsh's *alter ego,* Dr. Edward L. Keyes, was himself a prime Founder? And what of many, many, many Nuns—all over the land, from San Francisco to New York; from Halifax, Nova Scotia, to San Antonio, Texas? Nuns of the Sacred Heart; Carmelites, Franciscans, Dominicans, Poor Clares, Sisters of Charity, Sisters of the Good Shepherd; the list is far too long to complete. And it was not only—but of course, primarily, it was chiefly—their Power of Prayer that they so generously gave us. But what about their private meetings, their influence, their letters, their own abiding interest? Where indeed would —I don't merely say THE COMMONWEAL, but all other attempts at expressing Catholicism in Art and Letters be in our masculine-muddled America, glamored by Mammon and the bitch goddess, Worldly Success, be today—and where tomorrow?—without the Catholic women of the U.S.A., nuns and laywomen alike?

★

Turning (with regret) from this congenial if far too summary account of the actual, the day-by-day hard-working Founders, I don't like the job of criticizing the present Editors of the only American Catholic literary periodical that counts for much in the actual world of weekly reviews. The task becomes very irksome. But you invite me to hurl my few, harmless bombs—more noise than missiles in my words, I assure you—for in general, as an organ for Articles, Criticism, Verse, Fiction, Essays (including the delightful *causeries* and prose poems that Gouverneur Paulding for some time wrote under the illusion that they were Editorials): THE COMMONWEAL is something to be proud of: and I *am* proud,

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very proud, of the share I had in building it up toward such a high and consistently maintained level of sound quality.

But I object to your editorial policy chiefly because you don't seem to me to have a consistent editorial policy. I object to what you call a policy, and I a mess, being cooked up by a sort of collective group, or committee, or soviet, or council, or something or other which I for one cannot possibly define; any more than you can define the shape of a vague, drifting, shifting misty will-o'the-wisp. Your idea of cooperative editing may or may not be admirable if and when comes true the Dream of the Rosy Dawnites; and Saint Thomas More's Utopia, and Friar Campanella's City of the Sun descend upon our humdrum earth—where, as Blake, the Mystic, declared—with the clarity that only Mystics with their grasp of Reality achieve—the "bounding line" in Art and Thought is all-important. You can't run an Editorial Policy with a Committee, each man's Authority being held equal to all the others: the sum of opinions equalling zero. You can't do it any more than you can run a ship in a storm with such a planless Plan. Drop the plan; it's getting you nowhere; elect or hire an Editor; then eject or fire him if he doesn't make good.

But you ask for specific kicks: so, here are some. I consider you wrong in not fighting—I said *fighting,* not wise-cracking: fighting for, not minimizing, as you do, conspicuously and foremost, the cause of Poland, Lithuania, and the many other countries being unilaterally gobbled up by Bolshevik Russian power; unchecked, in fact, aided and aye actually cheered on by most of our hypnotized Governmental people, and our Press, and Peace Societies and, in general, our bewildered Do-Gooders, while our country breaks its sacred treaties and denies practical help to Poland and many other countries that were our allies in the war against Germany, and supposedly our good partners and neighbors in the World Organization, the Charter of which has now been adopted by our Senate amid a hurricane of Oratory—and a complete absence of Deeds to prove the noble Words! Where does THE COMMONWEAL stand? Can anybody really tell? I can't; and I read it as carefully, and with as much sympathy for and understanding, I venture to say, of the admirable qualities and ideas of its individual Editors as any of your readers can possess.

Again, I think that you have never been fair to the Spanish Catholics, victimized by the feeble, flopping Republican government, and abandoned to the Anarchists and the Communists—and a mixed collection of mere Scoundrels and Assassins—who enacted an orgy of slaughter that spared not even the priests, nuns, and laymen who were actually working for—not just writing and orating about—Social Justice. It's not your opposition to Franco I'm complaining of—I share that opposition after observing Franco's arrogant and stupid conduct since he came to power; I'm talking about the notorious fact that THE COMMONWEAL'S editorials are woefully weak in defending the Catholic Church in Spain—as such—and persecuted Catholics in general. Here your "editorials"—or prose poems—were namby-pamby, lacking in virility, spilling a welter of words instead of shaping a sword with them when the time and the occasion called for Fighting; not fiddle-faddling with minor verbal chords on your stylistic instruments; playing away at some sort of interpretative writing that might belong to an elegant essay as "Laymen as Casuists"—but certainly is not Journalism, in any real world—and certainly not in the world now going to pieces before our eyes as you bang at your typewriters, or meet at editorial lunches, with nobody as Chairman; out of which comes Nothing Worth Writing At All!

Certainly, the newspapers—of the Isolated kind, or the Germanic-minded type, or the Communistic kind, that kick at me for this or that feature of your editorializing; or the Catholic papers that kick at THE COMMONWEAL when some of them really mean its former Editor—and the many individuals who write to me on the mistaken assumption that I'm still running the editorial pages, or, anyway, that I give them my O.K., because of that ambiguous term, "Special Editor," can no longer do so—God be praised! And, thanks be also to your generous courtesy in making the matter plain, and public. So carry on—and the Lord bless you and keep you, and may the Light of His Countenance shine upon you, and, through your words, upon your increasing readers.

MICHAEL WILLIAMS.

We are deeply conscious of all that THE COMMONWEAL *owes to Michael Williams; we warmly appreciate his constant, unfailing good-will toward its present editors. With Mr. Williams's desire that his position of complete dissociation from the editing of* THE COMMONWEAL *be entirely clear we are in hearty accord. We feel it only proper, however, to say a few words in reply to Mr. Williams's criticism of our editorial policy. It is true that prior to Pearl Harbor there was a certain disagreement among the editors—as there was among all Americans—concerning the rôle our country should play in the war. This disagreement was in no way concealed, and editors with divergent views were given every opportunity to express those views in signed editorials. Since Pearl Harbor there has been no divergence of opinion on the part of the three active editors, and since our general system is to have each of the editors deal with subjects which he has made his own specialties, the picture Mr. Williams draws of a headless committee is fictional.*

The difference between Mr. Williams's and our conceptions of the proper function of this magazine is probably what lies at the heart of his criticism. He evidently believes that THE COMMONWEAL *should first and foremost be a fighting, crusading journal. We believe that it should primarily seek to winnow out the truth concerning what goes on in the world. We have crusaded and will continue to crusade over clearcut issues. The civic rights of minority groups—and indeed of all citizens—is a case in point. But when we are confronted by such complex issues as those to which Mr. Williams refers, we refuse to follow any party line, of no matter what party. We believe that our Russian policy since Pearl Harbor has been completely consistent in demand-*

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ing that the US, by combining firmness with true understanding, work out a way of living in the same world as Russia and in refusing to be stampeded, in the name of religion, by Russia's political enemies. For the tyrannous and anti-Catholic aspect of the present Russian régime we have no use whatever. But the ordinary American view of that country is shamefully over-simplified, and here again we have sought to serve as a corrective influence. In the particular case of Poland, blame for her present plight rests upon the catastrophic blunder of our own Mr. Hull in refusing to discuss this matter with Mr. Molotov in 1942, upon the intransigence and political stupidity of the London Polish group, and upon a Russian expansionism dating back to the eighteenth century. To invite our nation, as Mr. Williams in substance does, to fight Russia over this issue may seem noble, but is not a policy which we could in conscience advocate. Since Mr. Williams agrees that we were right in opposing Franco, precisely how can we wage battle in behalf of "persecuted" Catholics in Spain? The only Catholics persecuted in that country during recent years have been opponents of Franco, among them the Basques, and we have consistently pled their cause.—THE EDITORS.

The Screen

Is It Anyone We Know?

THAT we are in for a cycle of biographical pictures is evident. Studios have announced their plans to film the stories of celebrities like Tchaikovsky, Cole Porter, Jerome Kern, Marilyn Miller and the Sisters Dolly. On the screen currently are impersonations of such well-known figures as John L. Sullivan, Chopin, Gershwin and Wilson. And before considering this week's three new cinematic-lives-of-the-great, I should like to cast my votes again in favor of "Rhapsody in Blue" and "Wilson" (now being shown at popular prices) and suggest to producers that they consider these two films as models, for both of them have caught the spirit of the man and his period regardless of how the scripts may have wandered from the facts in their lives.

The mistake I made while seeing *"Incendiary Blonde"* was in trying to make some sense out of its story. Just because Texas Guinan was a lively show woman, a rodeo star, a movie performer in the old silent Westerns, a dancer and singer in musical comedies, and a colorful night club hostess doesn't mean that she could hold our interest through a long, two-hour movie. And just because her life was filled with ups and downs of this varied theatrical background and she was surrounded by men of dubious character like her father (played as a coy rogue by Barry Fitzgerald) and Showman Bill Kilgannon (Arturo de Cordova, acting like a stick-in-the-mud through a career that wins him five years in the pen) and the press agent she married on the rebound from Kilgannon but later divorced because she couldn't forget the handsome showman—all these are not points that convince us that Tex Guinan should be the number one gal in a biographical movie. Betty Hutton plays Tex with considerable bounce and vigor and even with a certain amount of pathos, but Miss Hutton's portrayal seldom comes through with authority. This is mainly because the film's scriptwriters and Director George Marshall were not sure of the real Texas Guinan; they were hampered by the facts (including the shady ones) in her life and they failed to interpret those facts with any clarity. The film has some entertainment value as a portrait of the rough and tumble prohibition days of the '20s, particularly in its gaudy technicolor numbers and songs of the period put over by Betty Hutton. But even the raucous night club (where Tex clipped her customers, greeted them with "Hello Suckers" and made famous her "Give the little girls a big hand") is not portrayed in such a manner as to make us understand Texas Guinan's great popularity. No doubt "Incendiary Blonde" wants to say, "When playing with fire, you get burned," but it is too long and awkward in saying it.

The story of Eddie Rickenbacker, as told in *"Captain Eddie,"* has been so stripped of its juiciest bits and has its half-truths so pushed around for popular consumption, that one wonders why the movies bothered with this biography at this time. The early part of the film has a mild fascination as a period piece, especially in the scenes of Eddie's boyhood which show his hard-working family and the youngster who has machine oil instead of blood in his veins. His love for machinery continues through the horseless carriage days, through his courtship and winning of Adelaide (Lynn Bari), through his daredevil racing when he cheated death so often, through World War I when he became America's Ace of Aces. Fred MacMurray, without his usual flippant mannerisms, portrays the persistent and strong-willed hero from 1910 to the picture's end in 1942 which depicts the famous rescue of the men after 19 days on inflated rafts in the Pacific. It is not entirely MacMurray's fault that the characterization is more a product of an assembly line than a flesh-and-blood man. Because of the film's technique, with a series of long flashbacks to the past in between sequences showing the men on the raft, "Captain Eddie" reminds one of that excellent Noel Coward film, "In Which We Serve," and suffers greatly by comparison on every score: acting, camera work, dramatic story and theme. All of which makes one wish that the movies would leave biography alone when they can tell a better and truer story by resorting to complete fiction.

Of course there are times when cinema does a real service in visualizing a man's experiences. Such is the case with the forthcoming *"Pride of the Marines"* which tells, almost in a documentary fashion, what happened to Al Schmid, who was awarded the Navy Cross at Guadalcanal where he lost his eyesight. Although it has a magnificent, realistically enacted scene of Al and two other Marines in their courageous fox-hole stand, this is not so much a combat movie as it is a picture of homecoming and rehabilitation. As such, it is one of the best so far, and due credit should go to Producer Jerry Wald, Director Delmar Daves, Scriptwriter Albert Maltz and the fine cast. The film starts slowly because of its determined effort to steer away from a fictional aspect and to

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establish Al (John Garfield) as a confirmed bachelor who falls head over heels in love with Ruth (Eleanor Parker); but it swings into action with a dramatic punch at Guadalcanal and afterward at the San Diego Hospital. Al's realization of his blindness, his terrific nightmares, his anger toward life and his refusal to allow Ruth to become a seeing-eye dog for him are portrayed with vivid intensity. These sequences plus one long hospital scene in which the wounded men discuss their future, their fears of facing life and the apathetic home-front, have a cruel frankness seldom found in movies; and they do more to make us appreciate what we owe these men than all the collected sentimental propaganda that has been pouring out in films and books. Through the help of an intelligent Red Cross worker (Rosemary DeCamp) and a wounded buddy (Dane Clark), but mainly through Ruth's persuasion that she needs him as much as he needs her and that there is a place for him in society, Al loses some of his intense bitterness and is prepared for the first steps in meeting life without his eyes. Needless to say, these are not pretty scenes. Because this is such an outstanding movie, I wanted it to be perfect. I wish it weren't so talky at the start and that it had the courage to end without the suggestion that Al may regain his sight. But this is a film that faces issues honestly and bravely, a film that deserves patronage for its moving use of cinema and its sincere handling of a universal theme: the returned fighter.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

Books of the Week

Against These Three. Stuart Cloete. Houghton. $3.50.

THE meteoric story of Cecil Rhodes has been ably told a number of times in recent years, but it nearly always seems worth rereading. Mr. Cloete has simplified that tale of boundless ambition and failing health by confining it to Rhodes's relationships with his two main adversaries in his personal conquest of South Africa: King Lobengula of the ferocious Matabele (who fades out of the picture early) and stubborn Oom Paul Kruger of the Boers. The author's triangular approach tends to blur details which straighter narratives would deal with—notably the Boer War and other campaigns—but on the whole his *tour* comes off.

Of course it was a hopelessly unequal contest from the start. Lobengula seemed to realize this and restrained his primitive Zulu warriors as long as he could. Oom Paul thought his people had a chance but was almost equally irenic, if determined that there were certain points on which he would not yield. And only the vigorous Oom Paul was able to do anything effective in the way of preparedness for the eventual showdown. So effective, in fact, that if the Boer commander, General Joubert, had pursued the greatly surprised British invaders, he might well have cut them off and forced them to sue for peace before the war was fairly started. After that it was simply a question of time, of months which must have ground by slowly for the British, before overwhelmingly superior manpower and resources told.

Rhodes had his virtues and none firmer than his sense of personal loyalty. But the lack of pettiness in his character only meant that he went in for spoliation on a grander scale. Whatever human or other obstacles there were to his imperialistic dream of unbroken British dominion from Cairo to Capetown were there, according to his biographers, to be swept aside. Few stories of conquest and exploitation are more sordid than that of South Africa. White exploitation of native labor to this day goes back to the way the country of the various primitive tribes was taken over.

According to his own light Oom Paul was a man of principle. For himself and for his people he wanted only that modicum of prosperity which comes from diligent tilling of the soil (and raising cattle). He was never far from his Bible, particularly from the Old Testament and the Hebrew prophets and patriarchs. He and his people shunned frivolity and sincerely regarded the discovery of gold and diamonds as a calamity. It was all of that. Yet apparently they had no more concern for the rights of the African natives, whose lands the Boers appropriated in their various treks, than did our own Pilgrim Fathers for the Indians. In their own minds they were righteous, believing men even so; in comparison Rhodes was but a cynic, the great imperialist of modern times.

Lobengula died when all was lost; his followers had shrunk to a handful. Kruger died in exile a disappointed old man. Rhodes himself had not reached 50 when his heart gave out; and although a large part of his imperial scheme was realized or in process, his last words were supposed to be: "so little done." Just as the gold strikes in Kruger's avidly coveted Transvaal availed few of the successful prospectors even material fortunes that lasted, so no one was victor in the battle for South Africa. Whatever may be the eventual good results, South Africa provides volumes of eloquent testimony as to the "root of all evil." Few are more eloquent than Stuart Cloete's.

EDWARD SKILLIN, JR.

China's Crisis. Lawrence K. Rosinger. Knopf. $3.00.

CHINA'S CRISIS is no sudden thing such as is usually connoted by that word. It is the lifetime of two Chinese generations, in which a millenial past of great beauty and power, followed by a long decadence, has begun to shape itself not into the equally decadent present of the West but into the future of world civilization. It is dawning realization of this historical fact which has led men to accept China's position among the great "powers" of the world on whom rests responsibility for the future, just as men have accepted France's position, though both China and France are tragically weak and disorganized.

It is heartening that serious students are emerging in the United States who are beginning to study Asia, the vast majority of the human race, and are trying to understand Asia rather than to pontificate, as though knowing all the answers. Nobody knows all about China, any more than we Americans know all about ourselves. Mr. Rosinger does not claim to. He claims to be a student, a recent beginner, since he only started his study after 1930; but he is a true student. He began by studying the history of the peoples themselves whom he was trying to understand, and what he could get in the short period in which he has been at it, of the highly complex language medium through which they express their thought. That approach is truly a blessed relief in the troubled sea of partisan and doctrinaire literary output which threatens the validity of that American public

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opinion out of which public policy must flow, in an ordered democracy.

Analyzing step by step China's position in the world today, he concludes that though China's government is not democratic, nor are China's acts, nor have the Chinese ever learned the basic nature of political and social democracy, Chinese nevertheless do possess inherently the traits which make for true democracy, in a right sense.

He summarizes then what seem to him to be "three of China's great political needs: to move toward democracy through swift leadership by the government, operating in harmony with the desires of the people [is not that also our own American need and problem?]; to give the people, instead of merely talking about preparing them for, democracy [as so many people in our own New Deal have talked for so many years about "the masses," "the common man" or even about "the herd"!]; and to carry democracy as rapidly as possible into the *district,* the lowest political unit, the heart of China's national life [as it is of our own American national life in spite of dangerous forcing of centralization which is the exact contrary of our own fundamental American life]." How China is developing, or not developing, along these lines, and why both are so, is the substance of this book. How all these things have affected or been affected by mistaken foreign policy on China's part and on the part of the Western nations is treated soberly in the light of history, of things as they are and have been for many decades of the near past.

It has been a record of mutual arrogance, doubt, suspicion, emanating less from mere brutal selfishness than from crass ignorance on both sides. He is not singling out any particular foreign office or state department for condemnation; he is dealing with facts. He points out the attempts to catch up with the consequences of harmfully awkward acts when they have become visible, such as our own repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1943. Repeal was a victory won for the idea of Chinese equality among the peoples of the world, but . . . it was won *after* our insistence on Japanese exclusion often couched in derogatory and insulting terms (rather than for dignified reasons) had embittered Japanese to the point of proving that they were not merely our equals but superior to the West in battle. A direct consequence of that is the savage hatred with which the first stages were fought in the Pacific, and that has had its repercussions even in our relations with our Chinese allies.

It is true that China has no national unity, and that her internal unity is not only necessary for the defeat of Japan but is essential to our own relations with China and China's future position in the world.

There is, however, one other thing which no current American writer emphasizes sufficiently in discussion of the present or of the future, though it is a major part of China's crisis.

China has always been the center and source of Eastern Asia's culture and civilization, but that is not all. In each of the countries neighboring the old Chinese Empire a different and divergent national characteristic has evolved; but in all there is a basic coherence with the Chinese source. They can not be understood nor dealt with destructively in war nor constructively in peace unless on that basis, which is at least as true as is the fact that in Western Europe each nation has evolved a recognizably different characteristic within what was once

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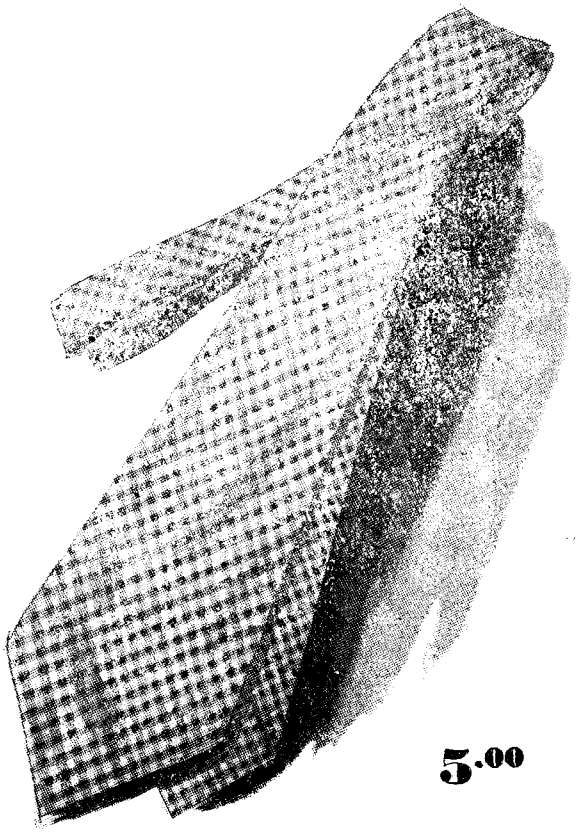

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Christendom. Japan's Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere contained a glimmering of that fact, but the Japanese have not been big enough to grasp its full meaning and implications. China, Japan and Korea are a root unity, of which the influence has spread in all directions in all recorded history. What we Westerners now do to, for, or with Japan, Korea and China is the same essential problem. Its three parts can not be divorced in the consequences of our acts.

WILLIAM FRANKLIN SANDS.

They Found the Church There. Henry Van Dusen. Scribners. $1.75.

FROM many quarters we are hearing of the profound impression made upon the armed forces by their contact with the missions, especially in the Pacific area. A letter published in THE COMMONWEAL recently, which I received from a chaplain in that area, is only one of a number of such testimonies. The present book is a collection of many such reports, mostly from Protestant missions, secured by Dr. Van Dusen from many missionary societies. These reports are linked together by explanations and historical data concerning the locality from which they come. It is thus an interesting survey, not only of the attitude of the members of the armed forces, but also of the history of the missions with which they came in contact.

In a few instances Catholic missions are mentioned, but the general impression given is that Catholic missions are in the minority in these regions. It would be interesting to cover the same ground from the point of view of the Catholic missions, and to show what contacts our troops have made with them. Yet this book gives a few characteristic instances of the sort of contacts which our soldiers are making with the Catholic missions also.

As we read page after page describing similar experiences, one thought came uppermost in my mind. This is the often-noted tragedy of Christian differences in belief, and the sadness of going to the heathen with so many varieties of preaching. "The incidents we have met," says one writer quoted on page 136, "reflect the work of almost every branch and every nation of Christendom—Roman Catholic and Protestant; Baptist, Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Congregational, Reformed, Lutheran, Disciples, Adventist; American, British, French, Dutch, Belgian, Scandinavian, Swiss, yes and German and Japanese." He goes on to say, "The divergences among the various Christian communions and between churchmen of different countries are great, and are often felt to be vital, and are not to be underestimated. Nevertheless, the fact must be faced that these differences have almost wholly escaped those who have encountered the several groups in far places of the earth, and that admiration for them has had no appreciable relation to their denominational bases or to denominational kinship between them and their discoverers."

This is perhaps true, but how long will the natives, as their education becomes better and their intelligence grows, be content to tolerate so many diversities of Christian belief? Will not the same thing happen among these Protestant missions as is happening in the United States, namely a gradual discontent with so many different forms of Christian teaching? It would be a very interesting study to learn how far the defections from Protestantism in this country are due to the fact that there are so many variations of teaching. Thus, even on the fundamental fact of the divinity of Christ, one may find individuals on either side, even in the same denomination.

This tragic condition is even brought out in the remarks of some of the soldiers themselves, when they deplore the fact that the Protestant people in the United States are so inferior in their practice and their faith to the converts made in the Pacific. Here is all the greater a calamity for Protestantism since its whole system is built on faith. Some years ago, speaking to a very mixed audience in Hyde Park in London, I called attention to the fact that in the driveway near the Marble Arch there is a triangular stone marking the spot where the priests of Elizabethan days came and offered their lives in testimony to the very same truth which the Catholic Church is preaching in England today. By contrast, when Talleyrand visited London, in Napoleon's time, he asked how many varieties of Christianity were preached there. They answered: "About three hundred different sects." He then asked, "Where do they get their authority?" "Why," said his friend, "they all base their teachings on the Bible." Whereupon Talleyrand exclaimed, "Mon Dieu! They have one Bible and they build on it three hundred different kinds of religion!"

None of this is said in criticism of the present-day Protestants, who, after all, had little or nothing to do with the original teaching of their respective sects, but in commentary of the difficulty their mission will meet in the future. Nor does it detract from the interest and value of Dr. Van Dusen's book. The latter chapters, which deal with the moral influence the invading American forces on native peoples, especially on their women, make very sad reading. While the natives have edified our soldiers, our soldiers, we read, have ruined much of the innocence and goodness of native life.

An American engineer, speaking of a citizen of an island where we went to construct an air base, says, "The island he loved so much overrun by strangers and the life of its people completely disorganized: His turtle refuge gone, his birds gone, and now all three of his daughters—far gone in pregnancy, and no one really to blame. . . . There are three hundred and seventy men on that atoll, all of them young fellows, lonely, homesick and, most of them, bored almost to death. Is it to be wondered at that they should seek distraction, consolation? . . . It's not only the young women who are involved; the married ones, too. It's a forlorn situation: one of those problems without solution. In the case of one native husband—killed by a soldier, presumably in self-defense—there was stark tragedy."

"I was thinking," he goes on, "of the far grimmer problem—of life itself—that the natives of those islands are faced with: of the fate in store for the vast archipelagoes in the part of the Pacific as the war gathers intensity. What will be left of the islands themselves, after hurricanes of shells, bombs, torpedoes, land and sea mines, have laid them waste time after time?"

EDWARD F. GARESCHÉ.

Tahl. Jeremy Ingalls. Knopf. $3.50.

ON PAGE 399 Miss Ingalls says that "none aims bombs by hand . . . since Passchendaele and Ypres crumbled when we were too young to learn to spell the names." This modern epic of 619 pages is unquestionably a poem, it has a definite unity, both in story and in form; it is not prose, it is blank verse (sometimes one

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is inclined to call it blankety blank; e.g., "Dyings not lovely, I'm saying. But no use yelping.") But the whole is bombs aimed by hand, and Miss Ingalls is too young to have learned to spell the names she uses for seasoning her stew: Damascus, Palestine, Barcelona, Chichen Itza, Jericho, Cain, Abel, Han, Heraclitus and dozens more per page. These are more than thyme and marjoram, than paprika and turmeric. Miss Ingalls is a child, playing with her mother's jewels: a necklace on which are strung as beads all the names for which, since time began, men and women have died, from Jerusalem to Jarama. These words, by which men conjure, with which they wonder and they worship, she has taken to build a lay figure for Gary Cooper to vivify in celluloid.

She describes how the idea of Tahl came to her, when she was councilor in a girls' camp, on a summer vacation from teaching. She was walking through pinewoods by the sea, when "the name and character of Tahl shaped themselves in those initial moments, with a force resembling revelation." Tahl would make a very successful movie star, half Tarzan, half Rhett, for he is ideally what every little governess has dreamed, dreams and will dream. But whilst Charlotte Brontë immortalized her hero by condensing and crystalizing, Jeremy Ingalls has lost hers by inflation—frog who would be cow and burst. When a child heaps its plate too full, we say its eyes are bigger than its stomach; a bird eating haws in the fall is unaware of the whole glory of the rose passing through it. Miss Ingalls is that child, that bird—to put it vulgarly, she has bitten off more than she can chew. Which is a pity, for when she does get hold of a mouthful she can masticate, it is pleasant enough:

> Autumn maize will ripen in the springtime,
> Western gold will jingle and jangle, crumble and crumble
> When the sun of the west strangles your throats.

ANNE FREMANTLE.

Drink to the Hunted. Ellen Marsh. Dutton. $3.00.

ELLEN MARSH has written a first novel of depth and perception. Whether you agree or not with her facile explanations of how nazism got the upper hand in a land where thinking people took a back seat, you will be held by her characterizations and her understanding and feeling for her mother's countrymen. For, like so many first novels, this book is strongly autobiographical and partially based on experience. Miss Marsh, like her heroine, is the daughter of a German mother and an American father, a lieutenant in the army of occupation after the last war. The book, which might have been called "The Bent Twig," covers the years from 1926 to 1940, the formative years of Lauren's life, and particularly stresses those people and events that influenced the girl.

The story opens and closes with scenes on a train: Lauren being brought back to Germany at the age of four, and Lauren escaping from the spreading holocaust at eighteen. In between are many train rides, for Lauren's restless mother dragged the girl from place to place throughout Europe even on voyages to America where the dissatisfied, unhappy Frederike visited her husband—but never for long. What skimping the author does in describing Lauren's artist-father, she more than makes up for in treating the maternal side of her family with whom the girl spent so much time: the grandfather, a domineering, Catholic, old-school Prussian officer whose arrogance and fits of temper contrasted with soft senti-

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mentality; the grandmother, an aristocrat with a touch of rebellion against authority but still the peacemaker between her stern husband and rebellious children; and most important, Lauren's mother, the unpredictable, irresponsible, beautiful Frederike who would unreasonably slap Lauren one minute, then spoil her with gifts, move her at random around the continent, then desert her at home for months. Frederike was a vain, shallow misfit, even at home where she always returned and where she quarreled with everyone. Lauren's education, sketchy, without continuity, ran the gamut from a convent classroom to the bars and cafés where Frederike was likely to spend her time. The most absorbing parts of this interesting novel deal with this mother-daughter relationship, which resulted through Frederike's influence and magnetism over Lauren in the child's feeling of insecurity during adolescence and a nameless fear of being unwanted in her young womanhood.

"Drink to the Hunted" is a long and colorful novel that emphasizes growth of character and change more than plot. Its scene moves often, and not only because of Lauren's jittery mother. When her grandfather lost his position as mayor of Galenburg, because a nazi party member got the post, the family moved on to Bonn. Lauren hated the nazis for changing the color of the streets, for taking away her childhood. She later learned to hate them for other reasons. According to Miss Marsh, the Germans were ignorant of what was going on in their own country. They became interested in their national rebirth, but they did not see beyond the games and marching—"and their dark ignorance grew." Irate Frederike says to her tired, worn-out father who is afraid of losing his pension: "Germany is what it is today because of people like you." And Lauren says to one of her suitors, a learned professor who is more of an opportunist than an intellectual: "You are afraid; you lick the hand that feeds you no matter how dirty it is." Lauren finally freed herself of her mother's unhealthy influence. She turned her back on her family and found some happiness in unhappy nazi Germany when she discovered that there were Germans who were anti-nazis with the courage to fight Hitlerism.

And this was in 1940. For the purposes of her novel (which thoughtfully makes the distinction between Germans and nazis overlooked too often by Americans) it is wise for the author to leave some hope for Germans at the end. While I do not always agree with Miss Marsh in her arguments (she is not sure of herself in her religious passages, and at times her political answers are too simple) and although her book is occasionally overwritten and at the same time too spotty in its short episodes, she has displayed an unusual writing talent and one that we should certainly hear from again.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

Scotland. Ian Finlay. Oxford. $1.25.

A STUDY of contemporary Scotland should be interesting and important, for Scotland is interesting and important of itself and its sons and daughters have made large contributions to the culture and success of the United States, England, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and other countries. Mr. Finlay's little book with its quick survey of Scotland's cultural, economic and political problems would serve the purpose well, for in most respects it is an excellent piece of work, were it not marred for many readers by his personal prejudices.

If Mr. Finlay presented Scotland as it is, all would be well, but he seems intent on proving that Scotland owes much, if not all, of its greatness to Calvinism. In doing so he misses no opportunity to strike a blow at the Catholic Church. Neither his book, nor this review, is the place to reargue the merits or demerits of the Reformation; but it might be pointed out in passing that Calvinism was, to say the best for it, a mixed blessing for Scotland, for its austerities and intolerance, its cruelties and persecutions, drove thousands of Scotland's sons and daughters (including my own ancestors) out of their own homeland to seek political and religious freedom elsewhere—which was certainly a loss to Scotland and a gain to the rest of the civilized world. Mr. Finlay should read some of the recent studies of the Reformation, studies that are concerned only with obtaining the truth and not justifying prejudices.

Mr. Finlay also seems eager to prove that the Lowlanders are true Scots like the Highland Gaels. Perhaps they are by now, but it is interesting to note that in the Barra Gaelic of the eighteenth century that I still speak, although a member of the fifth generation in America, a single word denotes a Lowlander and an Englishman, and there is no way of differentiating the one from the other.

NEIL MAC NEIL.

The Pattern of Soviet Power. Edgar Snow. Random. $2.75.

EDGAR SNOW, Associate Editor of the *Saturday Evening Post,* enjoys in some circles the reputation of being at least close to the line of fellow-travelers. In any case he is an extremely skilful fellow-traveler—for he does mention unpleasant aspects of Soviet life in his book. He describes the inequality of incomes which results in fantastic prices on the free market, accessible only to those who make much more money than the average citizen. He satirizes without any restraint the cult of Stalin. He notes that freedom of speech, press, assembly and organization does not exist in Russia. He admits that many innocent people fell victim to the purges, and that the war was conducted by the leaders of the Soviet Union without regard for human life.

Somewhat naive—to use a mild expression—is his white-black picture of China; the Chinese Communists are his heroes and saints.

His style produces the impression that even the most outspoken criticism of the Soviet Union is not meant as an expression of dislike of the régime. He tries to show that after all the Soviet Union under Stalin has won the war and has therefore satisfied feelings of nationalistic pride; and he is of the opinion that nationalism and a longing for security are stronger in Russia than communist ideology. (Prof. Timasheff of Fordham University concurs; see his contention in the last issue of the New York Russian quarterly, *Novyi Journal,* that a return to the communistic line is rather unlikely, that the great retreat from communism is probably a definite one). Snow is inclined to underestimate the difficulties which Russian imperialism—or more politely: longing for security—is producing and will produce. He describes Russia's policy of tolerating as neighbors only states with friendly, that is more or less dependent, governments and of carrying out in these territories changes in the ruling classes and in property relations. He does not deny that though Russia needs American support to-

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day she may become economically independent in the future.

The descriptions of the Soviet-leaders are valuable as impressive proofs of the secrecy which veils Russian political life. Minor errors do not matter—Snow makes his Soviet informants and their unwillingness to inform him responsible for them. Surely this book is neither very profound nor startling; it is a sequence of impressions useful for the cautious reader who is tired of boring analysis full of facts and statistical tables. To be incensed against Snow for being too little indignant and not outspoken enough about the ugly aspects of the Soviet régime—he mentions only thousands as inmates of concentration camps—is as unjust as to claim that such Soviet critics as W. H. Chamberlin and D. Dallin are sinister reactionaries or Fascists.

WALDEMAR GURIAN.

No Greater Love. Francis J. Spellman. Scribner's. $2.00.

SIMPLICITY and warm human sympathy go hand in hand to make of this an engaging book. Cast in the form of a travel journal, its 147 pages present an account of last year's pastoral visit which brought Archbishop Spellman to the battle lines on the Arno in Italy and before Aachen in Germany when neither the Arno nor Aachen were ours. More indeed than a list of places seen and of people met, it is a record also of the prelate's musings and of the impressions made upon him by unnumbered fighting men, from private to general.

Some of it has to do with post-war problems—with the hates and the fears that remain after the guns are silenced. But the greater part is concerned with present heartaches. It is in the assuaging of these, either through his own direct contact with the troops, or through what he has here to say of hope and comfort for their relatives at home, that the Archbishop is seen at his best.

Not the least touching of his paragraphs are those wherein he tells of visits to dressing stations and records the thoughts expressed by shattered men; not the least inspiring are those wherein he writes of GIs come from foxholes to hear his Mass under fire of German shells.

Diplomat as well as priest speaks in this book. With the diplomat perhaps one may be inclined at times to differ. For there is not a personage met in these pages but comes off with some measure of praise or of favorable comment. That bespeaks charity indeed; yet it also hints at a certain distortion and the playing down of the defects in famous figures.

Of wise sayings there are many in this journal. One example must suffice: Democracy, says the author, "like penicillin . . . is considered a specific that can cure all political diseases. But to our men fighting this war there is no better definition of democracy than the Golden Rule whether for nations or for individuals . . . Faith, hope and charity provide the only fertile soil for freedom, the only air in which democracy can breathe, the only axis on which the world can turn in peace."

And of faith, hope and charity one finds much in this diary.

HENRY G. J. BECK.

Bones of Contention. Lord Vansittart. Knopf. $2.75.

THIS violent condemnation of Germans as a whole, past and present—based on sources sound and suspect—has been rendered dated by the severity of Potsdam.

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The Inner Forum

Cana Conferences

A MOVEMENT which is starting in a modest way in our American Middle West is reported in the current (July 29) issue of *Orate Fratres*: It has to do specifically with the sanctifying of everyday family life. Less than a year ago five married couples discussed with the well-known Jesuit, Father Edward Dowling, the feasibility of inaugurating family days of recollection. The decision was to name them "Cana Conferences," focused on spiritualizing home life; at the outset it was agreed that both white and Negro couples should be invited. The first conference, in St. Louis, was held at the Academy of the Sacred Heart on the 15th of last October. In addition to formal talks and round-table discussions there was an exhibit of homecraft and literature on marriage and the home. At the closing Benediction there was a renewal of marriage vows.

Since that time ten conferences have taken place, three of them parish-sponsored, in accordance with the objectives of the Cana group. Children accompanied their parents to the conference on the Octave of the Feast of the Holy Family, last January, at St. Philomena's Convent, and since that time "day nursery" facilities have been provided. On June 16 and 17 Father Dowling conducted a weekend for married couples and their children at Don Bosco summer camp—46 couples and 69 children attended. Retreats have normally been separate for each sex and this is an effort to remove those obstacles which prevent a man and his wife who are united in Christ from making a retreat together.

Thus far 238 St. Louis couples have participated in these Cana Conferences; the movement has also made a good start in Milwaukee and Chicago. There is some talk of organizing a Cana village near St. Louis as a permanent community for certain interested Catholic families. Spiritual directors of the movement are chosen for their special competence on the institution of the family; they include, besides Father Dowling, Msgr. Martin Hellriegel of St. Louis, Rev. Frederic Mann, C.SS.R., and Rev. Raphael McCarthy, S.J., of Marquette University.

CONTRIBUTORS

Witter BYNNER, poet and dramatist, has been living in Mexico and is now returning to New Mexico.

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